



MEMORANDUM

TO: LHD Directors of Nursing, Nursing Supervisors, and other Nursing Leaders
LHD Health Directors

FROM: Susan Haynes Little, DNP, RN, CPHN, PHNA-BC, CPH, FAAN
Chief Public Health Nursing Officer, Director of Nursing

Crystal Tillman, DNP, RN, CPNP, PMHNP-BC, FRE
Chief Executive Officer, North Carolina Board of Nursing

DATE: September 19, 2023

SUBJECT: Joint Memo on Nursing Administration, Nursing Practice, and Nursing Supervision

DocuSigned by:

Susan Little

BD22B67CD714491...

DocuSigned by:

Crystal Tillman

B2CB8F63E9F44CC...

This memo replaces all previous joint memos from the Chief Public Health Nurse and the NC Board of Nursing related to clarification of required nursing leadership and supervision of nurses.

Purpose

The purpose of this joint memo from the NC DHHS Office of the Chief Public Health Nurse and the NC Board of Nursing (NCBON) is to clarify the scope of practice of the nurse administrator as defined by General Statute Chapter 90 Article 9A, the Nursing Practice Act (NPA), and Administrative Code 21 NCAC 36 .0224 Components of Nursing Practice for the Registered Nurse (RN Rules). The NPA authorizes the NCBON to regulate nursing practice in NC, including rulemaking authority. Rules promulgated by NCBON are contained in the NC Administrative Code.

Scope of Practice

The NPA and RN Rules define the scope of practice for Registered Nurses (RN) including their roles and responsibilities for supervision, administration, and management of nursing services delivery and personnel. The RN scope of practice includes components for assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The practice of nursing requires the utilization of nursing knowledge, judgment, and decision-making. The nurse who provides direct or indirect nursing services is considered to be practicing nursing, either as a volunteer or employee. The RN maintains accountability for the delivery of nursing services whether rendered directly or indirectly.



The Role of the Nurse Administrator

The relationship of the NCBON is with each individual RN. The expectations for the administration of nursing services are set forth in Rule .0224 (i) and (j) which define the scope of practice for the administration of nursing services. The administration of nursing services is the responsibility of RN leaders who may serve in roles such as a director of nursing (DON), nurse administrator, and/or lead nurse, regardless of the practice setting.

To assure consistent quality care and client safety, the NCBON encourages that a system's nursing organizational structure, such as public health departments, have an established nursing chain of command. This helps to ensure internal compliance with the NPA and RN Rules for the management and supervision of nursing services and personnel. Systems such as public health departments may identify an RN nurse leader to be responsible for: assuring compliance with the NPA and Administrative Code; establishing and maintaining a standard of practice; and managing, supervising, and evaluating nursing services and personnel providing those services. The RN nurse leader scope of practice for the administration of nursing services is defined in rule .0224 (i):

Managing the delivery of nursing care through the on-going supervision, teaching, and evaluation of nursing personnel shall be the responsibility of the registered nurse, as specified in the legal definition of the practice of nursing, and includes:

- (1) continuous availability for direct participation in nursing care, onsite when necessary, as indicated by client's status and by the variables cited in Paragraph (a) of this Rule;
- (2) assessing capabilities of personnel in relation to client status and the plan of nursing care;
- (3) delegating responsibility or assigning nursing care functions to personnel qualified to assume such responsibility and to perform such functions;
- (4) accountability for nursing care given by all personnel to whom that care is assigned and delegated; and
- (5) direct observation of clients and evaluation of nursing care given.

and rule .0224 (j):

Administering nursing services is the responsibility of the registered nurse, as specified in the legal definition of the practice of nursing in G.S. 90-171.20(7) (i), and includes:

- (1) identification, development and updating of standards, policies, and procedures related to the delivery of nursing care;
- (2) implementation of the identified standards, policies, and procedures to promote safe and effective nursing care for clients;
- (3) planning for and evaluation of the nursing care delivery system; and



- (4) management of the licensed and unlicensed personnel who provide nursing care consistent with Paragraphs (a) and (i) of this rule and which includes:
- A. appropriate allocation of human resources to promote safe and effective nursing care,
 - B. defined levels of accountability and responsibility within the nursing organization,
 - C. a mechanism to validate qualifications, knowledge, and skill of nursing personnel,
 - D. provision of educational opportunities related to expected nursing performance, and
 - E. validation of the implementation of a system for periodic performance evaluation.

Supervision and Evaluation of Nursing Personnel

Only an RN has accountability and responsibility to assure the appropriate allocation of human resources (staffing) for the delivery of nursing services to promote safe and effective nursing care. Only an RN has responsibility to manage, supervise, and evaluate nursing care services and practice [21 NCAC 36.0224 (j)]. It would be inappropriate for non-nursing personnel to define, manage, supervise, or evaluate nursing practice. Non-nursing personnel may manage or supervise only the non-clinical non-nursing activities or task of the nurse's job responsibilities. These tasks or activities would not involve nursing clinical assessment, judgment, or decision-making, or other components of the nursing scope of practice as defined in the NPA or RN Rules.

This memo remains valid until replaced.

References

[G.S. 90-171.20 \(7\) Nursing Practice Act](#)

[21 NCAC 36.0224 Components of Nursing Practice for the Registered Nurse](#)

NCBON Position Statement: [RN Scope of Practice - Clarification](#)

Matthes, A. & Hardee, A. (2019, Fall). [Am I within my scope?](#) The North Carolina Nursing Bulletin, 15 (46), 6-10.

Walker, C. (2015, Winter). [Who's your supervisor or manager? Nursing practice: the management and supervision of nursing services.](#) The North Carolina Nursing Bulletin, 2(32), 10-15.